

## **Congressman Wally Herger (CA-02): Statement for the Record**

Thank you Chairman Bishop for holding this hearing and inviting me to participate. In the Northern California Congressional District I represent, the federal government owns an enormous amount of the land, with it reaching as high as 75% in Trinity County. The Trinity County Public Utilities District, TPUD, owns property surrounded by land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. TPUD seeks to economically improve one parcel near the Weaverville Airport, but it currently cannot do so because it is landlocked by the Forest Service. I introduced H.R. 1237 to provide for an exchange of certain TPUD parcels for a portion of the federal land that surround the district's property near the airport.

My legislation would transfer 47 acres of the district's property near the Trinity River, known as "Sky Ranch," to the Bureau of Land Management and 150 acres within Six Rivers National Forest, known as "Van Duzen," to the Forest Service. TPUD would receive a parcel of equal value from the Shasta-Trinity National Forest that surrounds their site at the airport. This land exchange would benefit the federal government by consolidating BLM and Forest Service holdings and increase the efficiency of managing the land. This would allow TPUD to develop the property and enhance economic opportunities for the community.

Trinity County faces significant challenges attracting businesses because the federal government owns 75% of the available land, over one and a half million acres, limiting the availability of land for commercial use. The county also faces significant economic challenges because government mismanagement and lawsuits from fringe groups has shut down responsible stewardship and management of the county's vast timber resources. This decline in management has been devastating to the timber industry and had a multiplier effect throughout the county's economy with severe impacts on schools, infrastructure and small retail businesses. I have received letters of support of this legislation from the Trinity County Board of Supervisors, the Trinity County Resource District, the Weaverville Community Forest and the Rotary Club of Hayfork. I would like to submit them into the record.

In closing, I strongly believe that these resources belong to the people, and local needs should drive their management. Common-sense land exchanges like the one my legislation would implement would have the two-fold benefit of making federal land management more efficient while providing local communities with greater access to their natural resources. I look forward to working with the committee to pass this common-sense land exchange bill.